



HUMBOLDT STATE UNIVERSITY

Emergency Management Program



"ACADEMIC AFTERSHOCKS" BULLET POINTS

The Northridge Earthquake:

On January 17, 1994, Northridge, California, in the San Fernando Valley should have awoken to a peaceful Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. Instead, residents were thrown out of their beds at 4:31 A.M. with a feeling that the world was coming to an end. The earthquake measured 6.7 on the Richter scale. It was not even *the big one*. But to the inhabitants of Northridge in the quake's epicenter, it felt like the big one. This devastating event left "more than 50 dead, 5,900 injured, 20,000 homeless, at least six major freeways buckled, countless businesses closed and workers idle".

Bullet points from video for campus Emergency Management:

(1) Do you have an up-to-date Emergency Plan for your

campus? "...the key...is having this become a priority on the campus. It must come from the top. The President, the system, must support it as being as important to the campus to be prepared for emergencies as it is to teach classes. That means devoting the resources...the time ..."

(2) Do you have regular campus-wide training sessions and

exercises? "...you can't do enough planning. You can't do enough exercising your plan... You can't do enough bringing new people in and having continual training to deal with that turnover factor..."

(3) Are faculty included in your training, exercises, and hazard reduction program?

"...because they have to, one, save themselves, and then, secondly, they have to save their work..."

(4) Are faculty prepared to help students in an emergency?

"...we need to realize that the students are waiting to see what we [the faculty] are going to do...they're going to do what we're going to do...A faculty member, I think, has to really plan this out in advance and be prepared for this in their mind..."

(5) Are faculty, staff, and administrators trained to handle injuries and deaths?

"...the number of casualties...I would hate to think about what would have happened...if this earthquake would have occurred during work hours..."

(6) Does every department use and store hazardous materials, chemicals, and equipment safely? “...it’s absolutely critical...especially in areas such as the sciences, where there’s chemicals and equipment that take special handling...”

(7) Have administrators been trained in their emergency roles? “...administrators may have to step back and allow the professionals... onto their campus and take over, and allow them to do their jobs, until...the recovery starts to set in...”

(8) Are administrators aware of the kinds of decisions they will have to make? “...I had to make decisions about very complicated, technical matters, far beyond any education or training that I’d ever had...”

(9) Are damage assessment contracts in place with structural experts? “...[campuses need] liaison relationships with various specialties and specialists who are needed to assess and make recommendations on repair”

(10) How will you assess, and adapt to, the continuing damage caused by aftershocks? “...I didn’t realize that we were going to have 3,000 aftershocks! A lot of the damage to our buildings was done by the aftershocks, not by the initial 6.8...there was just this incredible progression of aftershocks, and many of them over 5.....”

(11) Do you have contracts for equipping and supporting emergency clean-up and reconstruction teams? “...we had to rent a whole bunch of...bulldozers, tractors, manlifts, heavy equipment... We had to bring in...contractors, laborers, construction crews...water, and restroom facilities, and food...”

(12) Do you have an adequate emergency communications system? “...the only phones on campus that worked were payphones...that was our...only means of communicating with the outside world...”

(13) Do you back up key records, and store them off-campus? “...we had NO records from our department office, and there were NO records available from the administration building...”

(14) Have you anchored furniture and equipment? “...in an office...the shelves were down, the computer’s smashed against the wall...you realize that somebody could have been sitting in there... Things need to be anchored!...”

(15) P.S. “...I would say to anyone who postpones working on earthquake preparedness that they’re going to deserve what they get...I am very glad that I went to all the trouble I did...” “If I were to give one single piece of advice... be prepared....”